

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Montpelier, Vermont**

TEAM: Independent & Federal Programs

ITEM: Will the State Board of Education grant renewal of general independent school approval to Killington Mountain School, in Killington, VT, to serve students in grades 6-12?

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the State Board of Education grants renewal of general independent school approval to Killington Mountain School, in Killington, VT, to serve students in grades 6-12. This approval is for five years, through June 30, 2014.

Approval is subject to the condition that the school immediately report to the Department of Education whenever any changes occur in enrollment, programs, policies, facilities, financial capacity, staffing, or administration during the approval period.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Title 16 V.S.A. §166 (b)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1. Killington Mountain School was established in 1974. The school's objective is to provide a winter term of educational services and select courses for college preparatory students with a sincere interest in pursuing competitive ski racing, freestyle skiing competition, and snowboard competition. Killington Mountain School accepts boarding and day students. Ski and Snowboard training and all the related athletic activities are provided by Killington Competitions Program working in conjunction with Killington Mountain School.
2. Killington Mountain School was last approved by the State Board of Education on August 17, 2004, through June 30, 2009.
3. On behalf of the Commissioner, Pat Pallas Gray and Laura Glass visited the program on March 10, 2009.
4. Killington Mountain School is located at the base of Killington Mountain Ski Area. The school facilities encompass a main building and an annex, which were originally designed as a motel. The school area is split into two main sections: the main building includes offices, 17 classrooms, and dorm rooms, training areas, a dining room and a commons room. The annex has 12 additional classroom spaces. The kitchen is equipped with industrial appliances, freezers, and a walk-in refrigerator. The main building and the annex meet all state and federal health and safety regulations and are adequate to meet the needs of the program. A

copy of the school's Certificate of Occupancy (CO) from the Division of Fire Safety is on file at the department.

5. The minimum course of study as described in 16 V.S.A., § 906 is provided and adapted to the age and ability of the students. The school has a well-developed plan for corresponding with the students' home schools. From the time of a student's acceptance to Killington Mountain School, the school's staff communicates with parents, teachers and counselors in a structured and regular manner. Follow up is done after the student returns to his/her home school. The school has available support services necessary to meet its educational purposes, including lab space for biology, physics, and chemistry, a small darkroom for photography courses, a library, internet-connected computers, and a wireless network. At the time of the visit there were 53 full-time students, 27 of which were boarding at KMS.
6. The Killington Mountain School has a Head of School, Director of Academics, Director of Admissions, Director of Development and Communications, and a Program Director. At the time of the visit, there were 33 teachers. The staff is qualified by degree and/or training and experience for their positions.
7. The school submitted information regarding its financial capacity.
8. The student health, assessment, and attendance records and the school fire drill records were reviewed and found to be complete.
9. Killington Mountain School has a policy on prevention of harassment of students that is as stringent as the Department's model policy.

COST IMPLICATIONS: None

STAFF AVAILABLE:

Pat Pallas Gray
Independent School Consultant
828-5414

Kerry Garber, Director
Independent & Federal Programs
828-3150

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Montpelier, Vermont**

TEAM: Independent & Federal Programs

ITEM: Will the State Board of Education grant renewal of general and special education independent school approval, to serve students in grades 7-12, within the disability category of specific learning disability, to Compass School in Westminster, Vermont?

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the State Board of Education grants renewal of general and special education independent school approval, to serve students in grades 7-12, within the disability category of specific learning disability, to Compass School in Westminster, Vermont. This approval is for five years through June 30, 2014.

Approval is subject to the condition that the school immediately report to the Department of Education whenever any changes occur in enrollment, programs, policies, facilities, financial capacity, staffing, or administration during the approval period.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Title 16 V.S.A. § 166 (b)
State Board Rule 2228 et. seq.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1. Compass School is an co-educational, independent day school. Compass School provides a unique model for publicly accessible education, serving children in their region while making an impact on the larger educational world. The school embodies an inspiring learning community that balances personalized education with high expectations for all, leading each student to successful graduation and post-graduate experiences. The school is an approved member of the Coalition of Essential Schools, a national network of quality schools dedicated to student centered, principles based learning.
2. Compass School was last granted renewal of general and special education approval by the State Board of Education on October 21, 2003, through June 30, 2008.
3. On behalf of the Commissioner, Pat Pallas Gray and Joan Larsen visited the school on May 21, 2009.
4. Compass School owns an 18,000 sq. ft. building that includes 9 classrooms, three offices, a music room, a computer lab, and a space for special education and small group work. The main ballroom, which is approximately 6,000 sq. ft., has space for all school meetings, a student lounge area, cafeteria, and a library. This space is also used for class projects and

exploratories. The vast majority of the school is fully handicapped accessible, being on one floor and with minimal grade to entry. The facility meets all state and federal health and safety regulations.

5. The minimum course of study, as prescribed in 16 V.S.A. § 906, is provided and adapted to meet the age and abilities of the students. Four broad concepts guide the design of the educational program at Compass School: Learning through a real world, project-based, integrated curriculum; achieving academic excellence through personalized learning; connecting school to community and the natural environment; and being a community where all voices are valued. Compass School has the services necessary to support its minimum course of study and its educational program. There were 80 students enrolled on the day of the visit.
6. Compass School has eleven subject area teachers, a licensed special educator, a special education aide, an Academic Dean, a Program Coordinator, and a Director of Long Range Planning. Compass School's staff and programs are overseen by an Executive Director. The professional staff members are qualified by degree, training, and/ or experience for their positions.
7. The school has submitted information about their financial capacity for the period of approval.
8. Student health, attendance, assessment, and special education records were reviewed and found to be in good order. Fire drill records were well kept.
9. The school maintains an operating schedule that includes a total number of instructional hours each year which is not less than that required of a public school serving the same grades.
10. Compass School has a policy on prevention of harassment of students that is as stringent as the Department's model policy.
11. Compass School has developed policies for admissions, discipline, and significant change in placement. These were reviewed and found to be appropriate.
12. Compass School has a full inclusionary program for special education students with special services provided within the regular program.

COST IMPLICATIONS: None

STAFF AVAILABLE:

Pat Pallas Gray
Independent School Consultant
828-5414

Kerry Garber, Director
Independent & Federal Programs
828-3150

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Montpelier, Vermont**

TEAM: Independent and Federal Programs

ITEM: Will the State Board of Education grant renewal of special education independent school approval, to serve students in grades 7-12, ages 12-21, within the disability areas of Learning Impairment, Specific Learning Disability, Visual Impairment, Deafness or Hard of Hearing, Emotional Disturbance, Speech or Language Impairment, Orthopedic Impairment, Other Health Impairment, Autism, Traumatic Brain Injury, Deaf-Blindness, or Multiple Disabilities, to Thetford Academy in Thetford, Vermont?

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the State Board of Education grants renewal of special education independent school approval, to serve students in grades 7-12, ages 12-21, within the disability areas of Learning Impairment, Specific Learning Disability, Visual Impairment, Deafness or Hard of Hearing, Emotional Disturbance, Speech or Language Impairment, Orthopedic Impairment, Other Health Impairment, Autism, Traumatic Brain Injury, Deaf-Blindness, or Multiple Disabilities, to Thetford Academy, Thetford, Vermont. This approval is for four years, through June 30, 2013, to coincide with the New England Association of Schools & Colleges accreditation.

Approval is subject to the condition that the school immediately report to the Department of Education whenever changes occur in enrollment, programs, policies, facilities, financial capacity, staffing or administration, during the approval period.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Title 16 VSA §166
State Board Rule 2228 et. seq.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1. Thetford Academy is a co-educational day school serving students in grades 7- 12. Thetford Academy serves as the designated school for students in the town of Thetford. In addition, the academy receives students from Sharon, Tunbridge, Strafford, Waits River, Hartland, and Lyme, New Hampshire.
2. Thetford Academy was last granted approval by the State Board of Education on March 15, 2005 through June 30, 2008. Thetford Academy is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEAS&C). A Two-Year Interim Evaluation Report is due by April 1, 2011, and a five-year report is due in 2013, at which time the Academy's accreditation will be reviewed. NEAS&C is an accrediting agency recognized by State Board of Education, pursuant to Rule 7320.

3. The school was visited on behalf of the Commissioner on May 28, 2009, by Pat Pallas Gray and Joan Larsen.
4. The Learning Center at Thetford Academy is a combination of resource room and consulting model, and home base for students with a broad spectrum of learning disabilities. The majority of students attend regular education classes, with accommodations and modifications. IEP goals are addressed by teachers in the regular classes and by special education staff in the Learning Center during the student's scheduled study center time. Students are not pulled from class to work in the Learning Center but are scheduled during study center or elective time. Services provided by the Learning Center staff include, remedial programs such as special reading and writing programs, spelling programs, math, tutorials in content areas, assistance with homework, teaching organizational and study skills, word processing assistance, and behavior management, as well as instruction and reinforcement of basic skills as specified in the IEP. A primary goal of this model is to teach students to use their strengths while remediating weaknesses so that students may become independent learners.
5. The Out Back Alternative Program provides an alternative setting for students identified through the IEP process as having specific emotional and behavioral needs, and being in need of services not otherwise available through the comprehensive network of supports for students with disabilities. The educators in this program work in tandem with mental health professionals. Each student's program is developmentally appropriate to his/her specific needs, and the student receives instruction at his/her own pace. When appropriate, students are given the opportunity to participate in small groups that follows an anger management curriculum from the local community mental health agency. The Out Back Alternative Program will be available if there is a need. There were no students in this program at the time of the visit.
6. Students are identified for the Intensive Special Needs Program through the IEP process, dependent upon the nature and severity of their educational disability. The Academy has a full inclusion philosophy, and students in Intensive Special Needs typically have multiple disabilities, often including special medical needs that impact least restrictive environment. At the time of the visit, the program was serving just one student who was exiting the program. Despite a regime of related services, the student was off-campus daily sampling a variety of work-sites in her local community. The Intensive Special Needs Program will be available if there is a need.
7. At the time of the visit, there were three licensed special education teachers and two interns sharing the caseload of special education students and students with Act 504 plans. Five paraprofessional staff members were assigned 1:1 to students, and two were assigned in the Learning Center, where they worked primarily with students on Act 504 Plans. The special education staff and paraprofessionals are under the daily direct supervision of the Director of Special Education, who is licensed special education director. Each staff member is qualified by training and/or experience in the areas for which they are assigned.
8. Thetford Academy has a policy on prevention of harassment of students that is as stringent as the Department's model policy.

9. The Academy has developed policies for admissions, discipline, least restrictive environment, graduation, and faculty qualifications. These were reviewed and found to be appropriate.
10. Thetford Academy coordinates with Local Education Agencies through planning and participating in IEP development and implementation, participation in evaluations, planning and implementing reintegration and transition services, and developing accommodations called for in students' IEPs.
11. Thetford Academy implements policies and procedures around confidentiality, maintaining educational records and prior notice requirements for changes in a student's placement or program.
9. Written agreements for costs and non-instructional services are on file for all publicly-placed students.

COST IMPLICATIONS: None

STAFF AVAILABLE:

Pat Pallas Gray
Independent School Consultant
828-5414

Kerry Garber, Director
Independent & Federal Programs
828-3150

**State Board of Education
November 17, 2009
Item F-2**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Montpelier, Vermont**

TEAM: Independent & Federal Programs

ITEM: Will the State Board of Education acknowledge that the St. Johnsbury Seventh-Day Adventist School, in St. Johnsbury, VT, has changed its name to Caledonia Christian School?

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the State Board of Education acknowledges that the St. Johnsbury Seventh-Day Adventist School, in St. Johnsbury, VT, has changed its name to Caledonia Christian School.

This acknowledgement is subject to the condition that the school immediately report to the Department of Education whenever changes occur in enrollment, programs, policies, facilities, financial capacity, staffing, or administration, during the approval period.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Title 16 V.S.A. §166 (b)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

1. On October 21, 2008, the State Board of Education granted renewal of independent school approval to the St. Johnsbury Seventh-Day Adventist School in St. Johnsbury, VT, through June 30, 2013. On October 20, 2009, the superintendent of the Northern New England Conference notified the independent school office that the St. Johnsbury Seventh-Day Adventist School was changing its name to Caledonia Christian School. The Caledonia Christian School is a day school that serves students in grades 1-8.
2. Caledonia Christian School is accredited by the Northern New England Conference of Seventh-Day Adventist of Portland, Maine. This agency is a recognized accrediting agency per State Board of Education Rule #7320.

COST IMPLICATIONS: None

STAFF AVAILABLE:

Pat Pallas Gray
Independent School Consultant
828-5414

Kerry Garber, Director
Independent & Federal Programs
828-3150